

Sup. 5
Serious Address

TO

SINGLE PERSONS

DESIGNED AS

A CAUTION

AGAINST

IMPROPER MARRIAGES.

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TO THE READER.

THE design of this address is to caution young people, who are truly religious, against every step towards any matrimonial connection which is not according to the word of God; and to keep at the utmost distance from every temptation, however agreeable the object, or advantageous the offer, in temporal things, may be.

Some people will probably object, that the scriptures quoted in this address only forbid the marriage of Christians with Heathens. It may be presumed, the reason why it is thought wrong for Christians to marry with Heathens is, because they would be in danger of falling into idolatry. But is not every natural man, baptised or unbaptised, an idolater? He may not, with Pagans, bow to the sun or the lovely moon walking in her brightness, nor pray to departed saints, as in the church of Rome: But has he not set up his idols in his heart? Does he not love father, mother, life, lands more than God? This the scriptures account idolatry, because the affections are fixed on the creature, not on God; and this idolatry of the heart seems to be of the worst kind, because of its concealment from human observation, and for the same reason has the greatest tendency to corrupt others, especially in so near a relation as that of a marriage-union.

Moreover, is not every natural man at enmity with God? *Rom.* viii. 7, in a state of darkness, *1 Cor.* ii. 14, and of spiritual death? *Rom.* viii. 6.—Now, is it likely, nay, is it *possible*, that a man who is alienated from God in affection, ignorant of his real state as a fallen sinner, and of Christ as the saviour of his soul, should help a woman that loves the Lord, to increase with all the increase of divine grace? Is it possible that he who knows not one step of the way to heaven, to instruct another in this journey? If any person be weak enough to expect it, the disappointment must be great indeed. Whatever advantages men may gain by the Christian name, they are heathens in heart and life, as to the things of God, till they are *born again*. Nor can they, unless converted by grace, dwell with God in his kingdom, *2 Thess.* i. 8. For as they know not God by experience of his goodness, and obedience to his laws, so he will not know them by an approbation of their conduct, *Mat.* vii. 23, *Luke* xii. 25, 26, 27.

It may be objected; on the other hand, that the scriptures are sufficiently explicit on this subject, to direct every conscience that is awake, and therefore the address is needless. Admitting the clearness of scripture on this and every other subject necessary to our holiness and happiness, it will not follow that all caution is needless.—Many doctrines and duties of the gospel are plain and clearly understood; and yet much persuasion is necessary to lead to the practice of these duties. For instance, who does not know that meekness is a principal part of the Christian character? And yet gracious persons may find caution and intreaty necessary when provocations to anger succeed one another like the dashing waves of the sea. Who does not know that the scriptures call us to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, to pray for them that despitefully use us, and overcome evil with

good; to take up our cross daily and follow Christ thro' evil and good report? But have we no occasion for arguments, motives, and intreaties to prevail on us thus to act in every trial? Nay, is not all the help we have from the pulpit, the press, the examples of the pious, the promises of the gospel, the influences of the Spirit, and the hope of everlasting glory, little enough to excite to all diligence in making our calling and election sure? Is it not, therefore, necessary to stir up their minds by way of remembrance, especially if we consider how many around us, in the small circle of our acquaintance, act contrary to scripture, reason, and conscience, in these matters, by indulging foolish desires and vain hopes, built on a sandy foundation; and how many others suffer a degree of loss in the divine life from this cause, who are yet restrained by providential circumstances from entering the marriage-state with persons of an opposite character?

Others may think, that this address might have come from a much abler hand—the author thinks so too, and has therefore waited in hope that something would be done; but as nothing of the kind has come to his knowledge, he offers this mite towards stopping the progress of a growing evil. Where the heart is already entangled, there is little expectation of reclaiming; but to those who are still free, it may possibly prove a word in season.—Should you reap the smallest advantage from it, pray for the author, and give all the glory to God.

SERIOUS ADDRESS, &c.

IT is generally granted that the salvation of the soul is of the greatest importance, and that nothing can possibly countervail the loss of it. It is also readily admitted, that the uncertainty of life, the greatness of the change required, and the labour necessary in the work of our salvation, call for an early and earnest attention to it. Hence Solomon says, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth;” and our Lord adviseth us to “Seek first the kingdom of God.” But, alas! what is first in the advice of Christ is generally last in the practice of men. Most are taken up with surrounding objects and earthly pursuits: Mirth, gaiety, dress, and company, lead them easy captives, and banish eternity from their thoughts. The best part of life is spent in the worst employments; the body, soul, and substance are prophanelly withholden from God; and either life is cut short, or age is loaded with the sins of youth. The infirmities of the body are heightened by the terrors of a guilty mind, while death is aiming his effectual dart to hurry the soul into a dreadful eternity; there to receive the wages of sin, an everlasting banishment from the glorious presence of God.

What a singular mercy then is an early acquaintance with the things of God! To have, not only good inclinations, but clear convictions of our fallen polluted state by nature, and of our actual offences in practice: Not only to be reformed from gross enormities, but to be thoroughly

changed in our affections : To love God because he first loved us. These are peculiarly dear to God, " I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me," *Prov.* viii. 17. Like John, the beloved disciple, they are permitted to lean upon the Saviour's bosom, and have near access to the throne of grace. They are called to excel in holiness, and, by an exemplary life and conversation, to be a blessing to mankind. Whatever station of life Providence may place them in, whether single or married, they, if found faithful, may eminently glorify God, and walk in the light of his countenance, till, like a shock of corn, they are fully ripe for the heavenly garner.

But the adversary of mankind will not suffer them to go unmolested ; they are sure to have all his subtilty and rage tried upon them : Objects will be presented, the profits and honours of the world will be promised by the deceiver, if they will but relax in their endeavours after holiness, and take up with earthly comforts. He will work upon the understanding to darken it ; upon the judgment to pervert it ; upon the imagination to deceive it with false colouring, and upon the affections to entangle and alienate them from God. Hence unwary persons are caught in his snare, the fountain of living waters is forsaken, and souls, once released from the bondage of sin, are brought under its dominion again. Some of these, by the grace of God, recover from their fall, and cleave to him with full purpose of heart ; while others drag on heavily, or halt between God and the creature. But when the grace of God is retained, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost are enjoyed, young persons need much help from above to guide and guard them through the vicissitudes of life, and to keep them unspotted in the world.

And of all outward changes in this life, none is certainly of more importance than that from a single to a married state ; and should, therefore, be weighed with

deliberation, attended with much prayer and diligent perusal of the word of God. The law and the testimony must direct us in this matter, and guard us from making a sinful choice. And on this subject that word is clear and express; "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers," 2 *Cor.* vi. 14, 15, is as plain as that "God now commandeth all men every where to repent." And this prohibition is set before us in the strongest point of view by the following questions—"For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or, what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" Most certainly none at all. Hence all those that fear God are strictly charged to forbear the company, counsel, and practice of sinners with the utmost care: To turn away from them as a passenger would from a thief, or a healthy man from one who has a contagious disease—*Prov.* i. 10, 15, and iv. 14, 15. And it is no small part of the righteous man's character, that he "Walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful," *Psal.* i. 2.

Can it then be lawful for a pious man to make one of these his nearest relation upon earth; and by outward ties to make her one with himself? Not while the before-mentioned command is found in the Bible. All the reasoning in the world cannot make that lawful, which God has so plainly forbidden.

Nor are examples wanting to add weight to the precept. If we turn our eyes to the Antediluvians, we may see the dreadful effects of sinful unions. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took them wives of all which they chose," *Gen.* vi. 2. Iniquity spread with an amazing swiftness, until "God saw that it was great upon the earth, and it repented him that he had made.

man." The awful deluge quickly followed : Millions on millions were cut off with a most dreadful stroke, and made lasting monuments of God's displeasure against unequal marriages.

For that fair female troop thou saw'st, so gay,
Yet empty of all good, wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise.
To these, that sober race of men, whose lives
Religious, titled them the Sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles
Of these fair atheists, and now swim in joy,
And laugh, for which the world ere long must weep.

MILTON.

Sampson, also, was an unhappy witness of this evil, in the punishment inflicted for his sin. His choice of a wife from the daughters of the Philistines, involved him in various and sore distresses; exposed him to many temptations, which gaining dominion over his passions, led him into numerous and great offences against God. After such conduct, we need not wonder at Delilah's stealing his heart, and betraying him into the hands of his enemies, who stripped him of his locks, put out his eyes, and wantonly triumphed in his misery, while he was painfully grinding at the mill. And though he obtained mercy, *Heb. xi. 32*, his sin was punished with death, and his final happiness thereby greatly diminished.

Should it be said, that Sampson's going to Timnath for a wife, was of the Lord, we answer, the journey of the spies to search the land of Canaan is ascribed to God, *Numb. xiii. 1.* and Shimei's cursing David is said to have been at God's bidding, *2 Sam. xvi. 10*, and yet it appears that the labour of the spies originated with the people, from their shameful distrust of the divine veracity, *Deut. i. 19*, &c. and was then permitted by the Lord as a punishment of their incredulity. Nor is it less certain that Shimei's

carries were not caused by a God of infinite purity, *Lam.* iii. 38, though the stream of his wickedness was directed by divine wisdom to fall on David's head. In like manner we must suppose Sampson's conduct was displeasing to God and his worthy parents, as a thing most strictly forbidden, *Exod.* xxiii. 31, *Deut.* vii. 3, *Judges* xiv. 3; but when he was determined to have the woman, right or wrong, the Lord *suffered* it, and used him in that way as a scourge to the Philistines, who had long vexed and oppressed his people Israel.

Solomon, likewise, after a most excellent choice of wisdom when he came to the throne, and shewing singular piety in building and dedicating the temple, was overcome by this snare; his glory was veiled, his conscience disquieted, and many were probably corrupted by his example, *Neh.* xiii. 26.

Ezra and Nehemiah were painful spectators of this evil and its consequences, *Ex.* ix. 2, *Neh.* xiii. 23, &c. The former rent his mantle as expressive of his grief and indignation, and both zealously strove to stop the progress of the dreadful evil. However, if neither precept nor example be sufficient to deter you from the practice, we will examine the subject more minutely, and consider the evils naturally resulting from a sinful choice, and the blessings which may reasonably be expected to flow from a lawful and prudent one.

We may readily suppose, that where genuine religion is possessed by one but not by the other, there cannot be any spiritual union or communion. No intercourse can be kept up on religious subjects; no united application made to a throne of grace for divine help; no mutual delight in reading the word of truth; no joint endeavours to secure the fulness of grace here, or the crown of glory hereafter; but while the one is striving against temptation, the other is adding to its force in alienating the soul from God.

And if a person finds it difficult to keep the life of faith without such an hindrance, and to run the Christian race without such a weight, what must it be with an impediment in so near a relation ?

Again:—Suppose a man should take such a wicked step, and marry an impenitent, unbelieving woman ; he must either be humbled for his sin and recover the divine favour, or continue unhumbled, departing from the living God. Admitting the former to be the case, which is more than he has just reason to expect, and that he is resolved to have the worship of God in his family ; the wife complies with reluctancy, perhaps sleeps in the exercise, is pleased when it is ended, and would gladly have no more of this drudgery. What a damp must this cast upon his fervour ! What pain of mind must he feel on discovering in her such a temper and disposition ! He had probably flattered himself that she would readily accede to every religious proposal, assist in holy exercises, and be a pleasing and agreeable companion in the various duties of life. How disappointed when he discovers his deception !

But again:—The husband must wish to speak of the things of God, and to order his conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ ; but this cannot be pleasing to a mind unrenewed by grace, and we may therefore suppose she will attempt to give a turn to the conversation, and introduce something more agreeable to her own disposition. Should he be off his watch and comply, or out of tenderness yield to her wish, and talk over the news of the town and country, of one man's fame and another's disgrace, of the riches of a few or the miseries of the multitude ; what must be the effect of such an abuse of time, but the departure of God from the soul !

A pious man must see it his duty, likewise, to bring up his children in the fear of God, and for this purpose to curb or break their wills, and to correct them for their

faults, not sparing them merely for their crying, *Prov.* xiii. 24, and xix. 18. He will find it needful frequently to inform their tender minds by giving line upon line, and precept upon precept, *Deut.* vi. 6, 7, and to set before them, in a living example, the amiableness of religion, in a sweetness of temper, an affable disposition, a serious deportment, and a firm attachment to truth in all its branches. This example will speak louder than precept, impress more deeply, and be found more lasting than all the flowing eloquence a parent can possibly use. These little ones may reflect in their giddy youth, "This is not living as my father taught me. I am not copying after his example. He prayed with me, wept over me, and affectionately charged me to remember my Creator in the days of my youth, and to seek the Lord while he may be found."—But how painful these corrections to a fond mother, who is ready to exclaim, as Zipporah did, *Exod.* iv. 25, "A cruel (if not a bloody) husband art thou to me." Her interference will probably defeat the father's intention, and harden the minds of his children against him.

"These are the product
Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st,
Where good with bad were match'd."

Nor can it be expected that she should instruct them in religion, while she herself is ignorant of its principles, or destitute of its power; and, what is worse, example will be wanting to lead them in the right way to heaven.—Unhappy children! you see nothing in your mother's temper which shews the meek and humble mind of Christ: You hear nothing of that conversation which flows from the kingdom of heaven in the heart; you see none of those acts of kindness to the fatherless and widow in their affliction, which evidence pure and undefiled religion: She never tells you of the evil of sin,

of the love of Christ in dying for you, or his readiness to receive you into his kingdom ; and though you see and hear of some of these in your pious father, yet he is but little with you to impart the help you need.

As the difference in their spirit and disposition here is very great, the one acting from selfish, the other from divine motives, so it may be feared, the effects of them will extend through an awful eternity ; for should the wife continue impenitent, and die without forgiveness, there is no possibility of her entering into glory ; and how bitter the thought of an eternal separation ! That after the nearest natural union possible in this life, perhaps for many years, they must part to meet no more : The one must ascend to unclouded glory, the other descend to the dreadful pit, *from* whence there is no *return*, and *in* which there is no *rest*, *Rev.* xiv. 11, while the horrid gulph between them will remain for ever impassible, *Luke* xvi. 26.

Hitherto we have viewed the subject in the most favourable light : We have supposed the man to be humbled under a sense of his sin in such a choice, and restored to the divine favour ; but how often has it been otherwise ? This sin has been like the breaking forth of waters : It has led to hardness of heart and impenitency of mind, which fitted the soul for endless perdition.

We have also considered the subject on the weakest side in another instance, by supposing the man to be pious, and the woman not so ; for the natural superiority of the man gives him a right to act according to his own judgment, and happily keeps him from many restraints. But supposing the woman to be religious, and yet to act in this manner, viz. of giving her hand to a man that is unawakened ; she engages to obey her husband, and by the weakness of her sex, and softness of her spirit, must be involved in numberless difficulties. She cannot insist upon family worship, nor command her household after her : She cannot expect sympathy, or a word in season

from her husband when weary in spirit, and may be restrained by him from seeking it in the society of Christian friends. Her wish may be to the gates of Sion; but he may insist on her abiding in her tent. She may desire the communion of saints, but he will prefer the company of sinners, and may daily grieve her spirit with their filthy or vain conversation.

But the common plea for this conduct is, "I hope I shall gain my partner to the Lord." Our hope of salvation for ourselves or others, should be founded on some scripture promise. But where is such a promise, or any thing like it, in the bible? In what book, what chapter, what verse? Do you say in 1 *Cor.* vii. 14. "How knowest thou, O man, but thou shalt gain thy wife? and how knowest thou, O woman, but thou shalt gain thy husband?" Nay, the Apostle is here speaking to persons brought to the knowledge of God since they entered the marriage state; and to them he gives blessed encouragement to hope their prayers will be answered in behalf of their partners. But this is quite a different matter, and affords no just room for hope to such as know the Lord, and yet marry persons who are ignorant of him; and to talk thus is in effect saying, that you will go out of the way of duty to bring another in; you will transgress God's law to excite another to obey it. Is not this doing evil that good may come? Is it possible for you to be serious and talk thus? Consider St. Paul's reasoning upon this conduct, *Rom.* iii. 8. See to it then, that if you engage with any person, she be not only civil, but serious; not only a hearer, but a doer of the word; not only a professor, but, as far as can be judged, a real possessor of the grace of God.

You may probably urge, "Why, there have been instances of persons who have been instrumental in gaining their partners to the Lord." There may have been a few. In these God has done more than he had promised.

and gone out of his common way. Perhaps he saw an uprightness of intention, with a great weakness of judgment; the former he kindly accepted, and the latter he pitied. But there have been *many* instances of the contrary kind. Those who had little doubt of gaining their partners, have themselves been drawn away from the source of bliss, to spend their *money* for that which is not bread, and their *labour* for that which satisfieth not. The flame of heavenly love has been extinguished; the seed of life has been choaked, and the last remains of seriousness have been well nigh swept from the soul. The heart has again been garnished with levity, and many things have invited a return of the unclean spirit with all his wretched associates.

If, after all that has been said, you are determined to make the dreadful experiment (which God forbid you should), remember you have nothing to expect, but that your companion will be as painful as a thorn in your eye, or as a goad in your side; that your way will be strewed with briers, and your whole life be a scene of affliction. And indeed it will be a blessing should your sufferings end with life: it will be an infinite mercy if it does not terminate in your final ruin. And should your path be thus rough, there will be a sting in every affliction, because this is the fruit of your sin. You will not be able to say, "It is what pleased God," or, "It is what was ordained for me." No; you have broken the bounds prescribed in God's word, and are fallen into this misery. You might have walked in a smoother path, but this is the fruit of your choice. Never murmur, never repine; but consider every thing short of everlasting torment as so much of undeserved mercy.

But supposing the person you engage with be truly pious, yet if there be not a similarity of sentiment in religious matters, it may in many instances be a source of

uneasiness, by restraining free conversation, leading to different places and modes of worship; and may greatly affect the education of your children. These things may appear of little moment to those who have never studied the subject, or who have thought on it superficially; but in so close an union and tender an intimacy, every difference in sentiment may produce very painful and fatal consequences.

Having viewed the evils resulting from a sinful union, let us now consider the happy effects of a lawful and proper one. These are great as well as numerous. Both parties being truly born again, and possessed of the spirit of the gospel, they are joined together in the Lord, and are one spirit with him. Their joint supplications ascend before God with acceptance, and blessings of every kind descend on their quiet habitation. The Holy Spirit takes pleasure in helping their infirmities, and delights to make his abode with them. Hence they have not only a sweet union of spirit with each other, but can thankfully say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 *John* i. 3. His gracious promise is often accomplished, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear," *Isa.* lxxv. 24. Their house is a Bethel divinely guarded. The Lord is their keeper, the Lord is their shade on their right hand, *Psa.* cxxi. 5. Their conversation is savoury to each other, and useful to all around them. Bearing each other's burden, they strive together for the hope of the gospel, and build each other up in faith and love. Is the one afflicted? The other tenderly feels. Is the one comforted? The other rejoices. If the one discovers any backwardness, the other kindly endeavours to remove it. If any improper warmth be seen in one, the other, by soft words, labours to turn it away. If at any

time one be overtaken in a fault, the other strives to restore in the spirit of meekness. What peace in their minds! What harmony in their family! What ornaments are these to their profession! while they exemplify, in the whole of their conduct, the excellency of that religion which has so effectually changed the natural dispositions of their minds! If there be any thing lovely in the marriage state, it is, it must be found in such an union.

If they have children, it is their mutual aim to bring them up in the fear of God, by steering the happy medium betwixt a criminal austerity on the one hand, and a foolish indulgence on the other. Correction is given with pity and moderation; not in anger, but in love. It is preceded and followed with prayer to God for his blessing; and, where the children are capable of it, with mild reasoning on the impropriety of their conduct. Proper restraints are laid upon their inclinations; suitable instructions are given, and just motives are used to cherish every good desire, and bring to maturity every hopeful blossom of Divine grace. And all these are carried home to the conscience by the example of the parents, who live the truths they teach, and by actions explain what the tender minds of their children could not otherwise understand.

Oh ye favoured children of such excellent parents! You see in them the meekness and gentleness of Christ displayed: the strength of victorious grace in their conquest of the world, their resisting the devil, and patiently suffering the various afflictions with which a gracious God may see fit to try their faith and constancy. You hear them talking of the goodness of God, the deliverances he has wrought out for them, and the blessed hope they have of being happy for ever in his immediate presence. You see in their conduct the features of truth and justice, religion and piety; and have the way of holiness pointed out in living characters. You have many prayers offered

up on your account, and are under peculiar obligations to know and worship the God of your father.

And ye happy parents, who have your quivers full of children! *Pf.* cxxvii. 5. What an honour is put upon you by your Heavenly Father! who gives you to raise up useful members of civil and religious society; trees of righteousness, to bring forth fruit unto God; heirs of glory, to be with you in heaven for ever. The promises, *Pf.* cxii. 2. *Isa.* xlv. 3. are to you. The prayers you have offered to God shall not fall to the ground; continue to pray, and believe for them, and you shall see the glory of God in their salvation.

Nor does their happiness end here: for though death will execute his commission as soon as permitted, and separate these lovely and loving friends, yet this separation is but partial, and for a little space: they may still meet in spirit, and worship before the throne of God; the one before a throne of grace, the other before a throne of glory. And after a few revolving months or years, they will meet again, to part no more for ever. Meet where sorrow and sighing shall be no more; where nothing shall destroy, interrupt, or diminish their glorious felicity. With what holy rapture will they retrace the footsteps of a kind providence, in bringing them together, directing their steps, preserving their persons, guarding their property, and compassing them about with songs of deliverance! With what ecstasies of joy and gratitude will they review the loving kindness of God to them during their pilgrimage below: the answers of prayer, the profit they received under the word, and the many blessed seasons they had together on earth! How will they wonder at the Divine goodness in completing their union above, and placing them among the thousands of Israel, while

“ They shout by turns the bursting joy,

“ And all eternity employ

“ In songs around the throne!”

Thus you have a faint view of this important subject on both sides; of the evils proceeding from a sinful union, and the blessings those obtain who are joined together in the Lord. You see the misery the former must expect in this life, and the danger they are in of losing their souls. You see likewise, what will most probably be the effect as to their offspring, through a want of mutual endeavour and example to lead them in the right way. And lastly, what a dreadful separation they are likely to experience when the King of Heaven shall come in his glory, and separate mankind one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: when the one shall be received with a "Come, thou blessed;" and the other be sent away with a "Go, thou cursed."

It remains then for me to address, and for you to take warning. Be persuaded, my young friends, at all events, to make the bible your rule of conduct in this and every other matter. Never indulge a thought of giving your hand to one that is a stranger to religion, though loaded with silver and gold. Suffer not the amiableness of manners, the beauty of features, nor the charms of youth, to steal away your heart; but steadily repel every attraction of this kind, with "It is written—Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers." Whenever you are in danger, betake yourselves to prayer, not under a pretence of inquiring what is the will of God, but for strength to obey a plain command. To pray for information in such a case, is tempting God, as Balaam did when forbidden to go to Balak.

But even where there is genuine piety, some degree of caution is necessary with respect to the UNDERSTANDING of the person you engage with; otherwise your comfort in life may be greatly lessened. - And this is more especially so on the woman's part; for every gracious man has not a good natural understanding, and if a woman of sense be

united to one of weak intellects, she will not find it very easy to obey where her superior understanding sees an impropriety in the command ; but will be in danger of wickedly inverting the order of God, by assuming the husband's place, or of becoming habitually fretful under the frequent mortifications she must feel from this quarter. Nor should the TEMPER be unnoticed, or thought of little importance in so close a union ; for where this is naturally rough and imperious, it will be in vain to expect tenderness and sympathy. This should be considered before any direct steps be taken on either side :

“ Nor let the cruel fetters bind
 “ A gentle to a savage mind,
 “ For love abhors the fight :
 “ Loose the fierce tiger from the deer,
 “ For native rage and native fear
 “ Rise and forbid delight.”

Again, it may be proper to consider the prospect you have in temporal things, and not to rush precipitately into poverty or embarrassment. While you guard against the snare of a fortune on the one hand (i. e. of taking a wife or husband for the SAKE of money), do not run into the opposite extreme : do not plunge yourself and family into poverty and distress. Remember Agur's prayer, and take care to make it yours, lest you should be poor and steal, and take the name of the Lord in vain, *Prov. xxx. 9.*

When you find a proper person, let your conduct be every way prudent : set the Lord always before you, *Pf. xvi. 8.* and abstain from the appearance of evil. Never conform to the shameful custom (found in some parts of this kingdom) of sitting up together a great part of the night. Never be longer together than you can be in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of his blessed Spirit. The moment you feel yourself in danger of departing from God in affection, have recourse to prayer,

and cry mightily to him for help, that you may not grieve the Holy Spirit.

It may be of real use to you, frequently to advise with serious, judicious friends, who have gone this way before you ; who can impartially consider the subject, and may give useful advice : and this is the more necessary where the affections are at all entangled, and have given an improper bias to your own judgment.

Oh, let me prevail with you to take advice ! Consider not the difficulties in your way of duty, but the promise and power of God. He will help and strengthen you. Whatever you lose in the way, you will not lose in the end ; nay, it shall be more than made up to you in this present life by the peace and consolation of the Holy Spirit, and probably in outward things also. If your eye be single, your whole body shall be full of light. The God of Abraham, who prospered the way of his servant when seeking a wife for Isaac, *Gen. xxiv. 42, &c.* will direct your steps, and lead you in the right path : will give you one who shall be an help-mate to you in things pertaining to the kingdom of God, as well as in things of this present world. As your way of duty will be made plain by his word, spirit, and providence ; so your union shall be crowned with his approbation and blessing. You will enter this new relation under the banner of your Lord, and with a covenant-right to all the inheritance of his saints. Living, like Zecharias and Elizabeth, who were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, *Luke i. 6*, you shall experience what is so beautifully expressed in *Job v. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26* ; and if both be found faithful unto death, shall receive the crown of life, and be made like unto the angels of God, who neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Then shall that remarkable prophecy, *Zeph. iii. 17*, be fully accom-

plished, " The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty : he will rejoice over thee with joy : he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing : " while all the church of the first-born, and the spirits of the just made perfect, most devoutly join you in saying, " Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen."

HYMN.

Father of Light, thy needful aid
To me who ask impart ;
Mistrustful of myself, afraid
Of my own treacherous heart.

O'erwhelm'd with justest fear, again
To thee for help I call ;
Where many mightier have been slain,
By thee unfav'd, I fall.

My only help in danger's hour,
My only strength thou art ;
Above the world and tempter's power,
And greater than my heart.

Me from myself thou canst secure,
In nature's slippery ways ;
And make my feeble footsteps sure,
By thy sufficient grace.

If on thy promis'd grace alone
I faithfully depend,
Thou surely wilt protect thine own,
And keep me to the end.

THE END.

allied, the Lord thy God in his will all this
weight he will take over thee, say: he will not
in his love, he will lay over thee with his wings, while
all the church of the dead-born, and the spirits of the just
made perfect, again devoutly join in saying, "Lord
him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his
own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God
and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever
and ever. Amen."

HYMN.

Teacher of light, thy word is life
To me who am ignorant;
Illumination of my mind, and
Of my own understandings more.

Of wisdom, which I call;
To thee I call;
What search I find in this
Thy word, O Lord, my King.



My only life in darkness, bring
My only strength and joy;
Above the world and temptings of the
And greater than my pain.

Life from my life thou canst bestow;
In nature's slippery ways;
And make my feeble footings sure,
By thy command: grace.

How thy promises are true;
I find them all;
Thou hast not broken thy word;
And keep me to the end.

THE END.

